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## The Vailed Sorceress; OR, LA MASQUE, THE MIDNIGHT QUEEN.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,

Author of "The Dark Secret," "The Twin Sisters," "An Awful Mystery," "Erminie; or, The Gipsy Queen's Vow," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE SORCERESS.

The plague raged in the city of London. The destroying angel had gone forth, and kindled with its fiery breath the awful pestilence, until all London became one mighty lazaretto. Thousands were swept away daily; grass grew in the streets, and the living were scarce able to bury the dead. Business of all kinds was at an end, except that of the coffin-makers and drivers of the pest-carts. Whole streets were shut up, and almost every other house in the city bore the fatal red cross, and the ominous inscription: "Lord have mercy on us." Few people save the watchmen, armed with halberds, keeping guard over the stricken houses, appeared in the streets; and those who ventured there, shrank from each other, and passed rapidly on with averted faces. Many even fell dead on the sidewalk, and lay with their ghastly, discolored faces upturned to the mocking sunlight, until the dead cart came rattling along, and the drivers hoisted the body with their pitchforks on the top of their dreadful load. Few other vehicles besides those same dead-carts appeared in the city now; and they plied their trade busily, day and night; and the cry of the drivers echoed dismal through the deserted streets: "Bring out your dead! bring out your dead!" All who could do so had long ago fled from the devoted city; and London lay under the burning heat of the June sunshine, stricken for its sins by the hand of God. The pest-houses were full, so were the plague-pits, where the dead were hurled in cartfuls; and no one knew who rose up in health in the morning but that they might be lying stark and dead in a few hours. The very churches were forsaken; their pastors fled or lying in the plague-pits; and it was even resolved to convert the great cathedral of St. Paul into a vast plague-hospital. Cries and lamentations echoed from one end of the city to the other, and Death and Charles reigned over London together.

Yet, in the midst of all this, many scenes of wild orgies and debauchery still went on within its gates—as, in our own day, when the cholera ravaged Paris, the inhabitants of that facious city made it a carnival; so now, in London, there were many who, feeling they had but a few days to live at the most, resolved to defy death, and indulge in the revelry while they yet existed. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die!" was their motto; and if in the midst of the frantic dance or debauched revel one of them dropped dead, the others only shrieked with laughter, hurled the livid body out to the street, and the demoniac mirth grew twice as fast and furious as before. Robbers and cut-purses paraded the streets at noonday, entered boldly closed and deserted houses, and bore off, with impunity, whatever they pleased. Highwaymen infested Hounslow Heath, and all the roads leading from the city, levying a toll on all who passed, and plundering fearlessly the citizens. In fact, far-famed London town, in the year of grace 1865, would have given one a good idea of Pandemonium broke loose.

It was drawing to the close of an almost tropical June day, that the crowd who had thronged the precincts of St. Paul's since early morning, began to disperse. The sun, that had throbbed the five-long day like a great heart of fire in a sea of brass, was sinking from sight in clouds of crimson, purple and gold, yet Paul's walk was crowded. There were court-gallants in ruffles and plumes; ballad-singers chanting the not-over delicate ditties of the Earl of Rochester; usurers exchanging gold for bonds worth three times what they gave for them; quack-doctors reading in dolorous tones the bills of mortality of the preceding day, and selling plague-waters and anti-pestilential abominations, whose merit they loudly extolled; ladies, too, richly dressed, and many of them masked; and book-sellers who always made St. Paul's a favorite haunt, and even to this day patronize its precincts and flourish in the regions of Paternoster Row and Ave Maria Lane; court pages in rich liveries, pert and flippant; serving-men out of place, and pickpockets with a keen eye to business; all clashed and jostled together, raising a din to which the Plain of Shinar, with its confusion of tongues and Babylonian workmen, were as nothing.

Moving serenely through this discordant sea of his fellow-creatures came a young man booted and spurred, whose rich doublet of cherry-colored velvet, edged and spangled with gold, and jaunty hat set slightly on one side of his head, with its long black plume and diamond clasp, proclaimed him to be somebody. A profusion of snowy shirt-trill rushed impetuously out of his doublet; a black-velvet cloak, lined with amber-satin, fell picturesquely from his shoulders; a sword with a jeweled hilt clanked on the pavement as he walked. One hand was



While Sir Norman gazed in astonishment and incredulity, the scene faded away and another took its place.

covered with a gauntlet of canary-colored kid, perfumed to a degree that would shame any belle of to-day; the other, which rested lightly on his sword-hilt, flashed with a splendid opal, splendidly set. He was a handsome fellow, too, with fair, waving hair (for he had the good taste to discard the ugly wigs then in vogue), dark, bright, handsome eyes, a thick blonde mustache, a tall and remarkably graceful figure, and an expression of countenance wherein ease and good-nature and fiery impetuosity had a hard struggle for mastery. That he was a courtier of rank, was apparent from his rich attire and rather aristocratic bearing, and a crowd of hangers-on followed him as he went, loudly demanding spur-money. A group of timbrel girls, singing shrilly the songs of the day, called boldly to him as he passed; and one of them, more free and easy than the rest, danced up to him, striking her timbrel, and shouting rather than singing the chorus of the then popular ditty:

"What care I for pest or plague?  
We can die but once, God wot,  
Kiss me, darling—stay with me;  
Love me—love me, leave me not!"

The darling in question turned his bright

blue eyes on that dashing street-singer with a cool glance of recognition.

"Very sorry, Nell," he said, in a nonchalant tone, "but I'm afraid I must. How long have you been here, may I ask?"

"A full hour by St. Paul's; and where has Sir Norman Kingsley been, may I ask? I thought you were dead of the plague."

"Not exactly. Have you seen—ah! there he is. The very man I want."

With which Sir Norman Kingsley dropped a gold piece into the girl's extended palm, and pushed on through the crowd up Paul's Walk.

A tall, dark figure was leaning moodily with folded arms, looking fixedly at the ground,

and taking no notice of the busy scene around him, until Sir Norman laid his ungloved and jeweled hand lightly on his shoulder.

"Good-morning, Ormiston! I had an idea I would find you here, and—but what's the matter with you, man? Have you got the plague? or has your mysterious inamorata jilted you? or what other annoyance has happened to make you look as woebegone as old King Lear, sent adrift by his tender daughters to take care of himself?"

"I was thinking of her," said the young man, moodily, and with a darkening brow.

Sir Norman favored him with a half-amused, half-contemptuous stare for a moment; then stopped at a huckster's stall to purchase some

the individual addressed lifted his head, disclosing a dark and rather handsome face, set now into a look of gloomy discontent. He slightly raised his hat as he saw who his questioner was.

"Ah! it's you, Sir Norman! I had given up all notion of your coming, and was about to quit this confounded babel—this tumultuous den of thieves. What has detained you?"

"I was on duty at Whitehall. Are we not in time to keep our appointment?"

"Oh, certainly! La Masque is at home to visitors at all hours, day and night. I believe in my soul she doesn't know what sleep means."

"And you are still as much in love with her as ever, I dare swear! I have no doubt, now, it was of her you were thinking when I came up. Nothing else could ever have made you look so dismally woebegone as you did when Providence sent me to your relief."

"I was thinking of her," said the young man, moodily, and with a darkening brow.

Sir Norman favored him with a half-amused,

half-contemptuous stare for a moment; then stopped at a huckster's stall to purchase some

cigarettes; lit one, and, after smoking for a few minutes, pleasantly remarked, as if the fact had just struck him:

"Ormiston, you're a fool!"

"I know it!" said Ormiston, sententiously.

"The idea," said Sir Norman, knocking the ashes faintly off the end of his cigar with the tip of his little finger—"the idea of falling in love with a woman whose face you have never seen! I can understand a man's going to any absurd extreme when he falls in love in proper Christian fashion, with a proper Christian face; but to go stark, staring mad, as you have done, my dear fellow, about a black loo mask, why—I consider that a little too much of a good thing! Come, let us go."

Nodding easily to his numerous acquaintances as he went, Sir Norman Kingsley sauntered leisurely down Paul's Walk, and out through the great door of the cathedral, followed by his melancholy friend. Pausing for a moment to gaze at the gorgeous sunset with a look of languid admiration, Sir Norman passed his arm through that of his friend, and they walked on at a rapid pace, in the direction of old London Bridge. There were few people abroad, except the watchmen walking slowly up and down before the plague-stricken houses; but in every street they passed through they noticed huge piles of wood and coal heaped down the center. Smoking zealously, they had walked on for a season in silence, when Ormiston ceased puffing for a moment, to inquire:

"What are all these for? This is a strange time, I should imagine, for bonfires."

"They're not bonfires," said Sir Norman; "at least, they are not intended for that; and if your head was not fuller of that masked Witch of Endor than common sense (for I believe she is nothing better than a witch), you could not have helped knowing. The Lord Mayor of London has been inspired, suddenly, with a notion, that if several thousand fires are kindled at once in the streets, it will purify the air, and check the pestilence; so when St. Paul's tolls the hour of midnight, all these piles are to be fired. It will be a glorious illumination, no doubt; but as to its stopping the progress of the plague, I am afraid that it is altogether too good to be true."

"Why should you doubt it? The plague cannot last forever."

"No. But Lilly, the astrologer, who predicted its coming, also foretold that it would last for many months yet; and since one prophecy has come true, I see no reason why the other should not."

"Except the simple one that there would be nobody left alive to take it. All London will be buried in the plague-pits by that time."

"A pleasant prospect; but a true one, I have no doubt. And, as I have no ambition to be hurled headlong into one of those horrible holes, I shall leave town altogether in a few days. And, Ormiston, I would strongly recommend you to follow my example."

"Not I!" said Ormiston, in a tone of gloomy resolution. "While La Masque stays, so will I."

"And perhaps die of the plague in a week."

"So be it! I don't fear the plague half as much as I do the thought of losing her!"

Again Sir Norman stared.

"Oh, I see! It's a hopeless case! Faith, I begin to feel curious to see this enchantress, who has managed so effectually to turn your brain. When did you see her last?"

"Yesterday," said Ormiston, with a deep sigh. "And if she were made of granite, she could not be harder to me than she is!"

"So she doesn't care about you, then?"

"Not she! She has a little Blenheim lap-dog, that she loves a thousand times more than she ever will me!"

"Then what an idiot you are, to keep haunting her like her shadow! Why don't you be a man, and tear out from your heart such a godless?"

"Ah! that's easily said; but if you were in my place, you'd act exactly as I do."

"I don't believe it. It's not in me to go mad about anything with a masked face and a marble heart. If I loved any woman—which, thank Fortune, at this present time I do not—and she had the bad taste not to return it, I should take my hat, make her a bow, and go directly and love somebody else made of flesh and blood, instead of cast-iron! You know the old song, Ormiston:

"If she be not fair for me  
What care I how fair she be!"

"Kingsley, you know nothing about it!" said Ormiston, impatiently. "So stop talking nonsense. If you are cold-blooded, I am not; and—I love her!"

Sir Norman slightly shrugged his shoulders, and flung his smoked-out weed into a heap of firewood.

"Are we near her house?" he asked. "Yonder is the bridge."

"And yonder is the house," replied Ormiston, pointing to a large, ancient building—an ancient even for those times—with three stories, each projecting over the other. "See! while the houses on either side are marked as pest-stricken, hers alone bears no cross. So it is: those who cling to life are stricken with death; and those who, like me, are desperate, even death shuns."

"Why, my dear Ormiston, you surely are not so far gone as that! Upon my honor, I had no idea you were in such a bad way."

"I am nothing but a miserable wretch! and I wish to Heaven I was in yonder dead-earth, with the rest of them—and she, too, if she never intends to love me!"

Ormiston spoke with such fierce earnestness, that there was no doubt his sincerity; and Sir Norman became profoundly shocked—so much so, that he did not speak again until they were almost at the door." Then he opened his lips to ask, in a subdued tone:

"She has predicted the future for you—what did she foretell?"

"Nothing good; no fear of there being anything in store for such an unlucky dog as I am."

"Where did she learn this wonderful black art of hers?"

"In the East, I believe. She has been there, and all over the world; and now visits England for the first time."

"She has chosen a sprightly season for her visit. Is she not afraid of the plague, I wonder?"

"No; she fears nothing," said Ormiston, as he knocked loudly at the door. "I begin to believe she is made of adamant instead of what other women are made of."

"Which is a rib, I believe," observed Sir Norman, thoughtfully. "And that accounts, I dare say, for their being of such a crooked and cantankerous nature. They're a wonderful race, women are; and for what inscrutable reason it has pleased Providence to create them!"

The opening of the door brought to a sudden end this little touch of moralizing, and a wrinkled old porter thrust out a very withered and unlovely face.

"Is La Masque at home?" inquired Ormiston, stepping in, without ceremony.

The old man nodded, and pointed up-stairs; and with a "This way, Kingsley," Ormiston sprung lightly up, three at a time, followed in the same style by Sir Norman.

"You seem pretty well acquainted with the latitude and longitude of this place," observed that young gentleman, as they passed into a room at the head of the stairs.

"I ought to be; I've been here often enough," said Ormiston. "This is the common waiting-room for all who wish to consult La Masque. That old bag of bones who lets us in has gone to announce us."

Sir Norman took a seat, and glanced curiously round the room. It was a commonplace apartment enough, with a floor of polished black oak, slippery as ice, and shining like glass; a few old Flemish paintings on the walls; a large, round table in the center of the floor, on which lay a pair of the old musical instruments called "virginals." Two large, curtainless windows, with minute diamond-shaped panes, set in leaden casements, admitted the golden and crimson light.

"For the reception-room of a sorceress," remarked Sir Norman, with an air of disappointed criticism, "there is nothing very wonderful about all this. How is it she spares fortunes, anyway? As Lilly does by maps and charts, or as these old Eastern mufli do it by magic mirrors and all such fooleries?"

"Neither," said Ormiston; "her style is more like that of the Indian almeches, who show you your destiny in a well. She has a sort of magic lake in her room, and—but you will see it all for yourself presently."

"I have always heard," said Sir Norman, in the same meditative way, "that truth lies at the bottom of a well, and I am glad some one has turned up at last who is able to find it out. Ah! Here comes our ancient Mercury to show us to the presence of your goddess."

The door opened, and the "old bag of bones," as Ormiston irreverently styled his lady-love's ancient domestic, made a sign for them to follow him. Leading the way down a long corridor, he flung open a pair of shining folding-doors at the end, and ushered them at once into the majestic presence of the sorceress and her magic room. Both gentlemen doffed their plumed hats. Ormiston stepped forward at once; but Sir Norman discreetly paused in the doorway to contemplate the scene of action. As he slowly did so, a look of deep displeasure settled on his features, on finding it not half so awful as he had supposed.

In some ways it was very like the room they had left, being low, large and square, and having floors, walls and ceiling panelled with glossy black oak. But it had no windows—a large bronze lamp, suspended from the center of the ceiling, shed a flickering, ghostly light. There were no paintings—some grim carvings of skulls, skeletons, and serpents, pleasantly wreathed the room—neither were there seats nor tables—noting but a huge ebony caldron at the upper end of the apartment, over which a grimacing skeleton on wires, with a scythe in one hand of bone, and an hour-glass in the other, kept watch and ward. Opposite this cheerful-looking caldron was a tall figure in black, standing as motionless as if it, too, was carved in ebony. It was a female figure, very tall and slight, but as beautifully symmetrical as a Venus Celestis. Her dress was of black velvet, that swept the polished floor, spangled all over with stars of gold and rich rubies. A profusion of shining black hair fell in waves and curls almost to her feet; but her face, from forehead to chin, was completely hidden by a black velvet mask. In one hand, exquisitely small and white, she held a gold casket, blazing (like her dress) with rubies, and with the other she toyed with a tame viper, that had twined itself round her wrist. This was doubtless La Masque, and becoming conscious of that fact, Sir Norman made her a low and courtly bow. She returned it by a slight bend of the head, and turning toward his companion, spoke:

"You here again, Mr. Ormiston! To what am I indebted for the honor of two visits in two days?"

Her voice, Sir Norman thought, was the sweetest he had ever heard, musical as a chime of silver bells, soft as the tones of an aeolian harp through which the west wind plays.

"Madam, I am aware my visits are undesired," said Ormiston, with a flushing cheek and slightly tremulous voice; "but I have merely come with my friend, Sir Norman Kingsley, who wishes to know what the future has in store for him."

Thus invoked, Sir Norman Kingsley stepped forward, with another low bow, to the masked lady.

"Yes, madam, I have long heard that those fair fingers can withdraw the curtain of the future, and I have come to see what Dame Destiny is going to do for me."

"Sir Norman Kingsley is welcome," said the sweet voice, "and shall see what he desires. There is but one condition, that he will keep

perfectly silent; for if he speaks, the scene he beholds will vanish. Come forward!"

Sir Norman compressed his lips as closely as if they were forever hermetically sealed, and came forward accordingly. Leaning over the edge of the ebony caldron, he found that it contained nothing more dreadful than water, for he labored under a vague and unpleasant idea that, like the witches' caldron in Macbeth, it might be filled with serpents' blood and children's brains. La Masque opened her golden casket, and took from it a portion of red powder, with which it was filled. Casting it into the caldron, she murmured an invocation in Tongue, or Coptic, or some other unknown tongue, and slowly there arose a dense cloud of dark red smoke, that nearly filled the room.

Had Sir Norman ever read the story of Aladdin, he would probably have thought of it then; but the young courtier did not greatly affect literature of any kind, and thought of nothing now but of seeing something when the smoke cleared away. It was rather long in doing so, and when it did, he saw nothing at last but his own handsome, half-serious, half-incredulous face; but gradually a picture, distinct and clear, formed itself at the bottom, and Sir Norman gazed with bewildered eyes. He saw a large room filled with a sparkling crowd, many of them ladies, splendidly arrayed and flashing in jewels, and foremost among them stood one whose beauty surpassed anything he had ever before dreamed of. She wore the robes of a queen, purple and ermine—diamonds blazed on the beautiful neck, arms and fingers, and a tiara of the same brilliant crown her regal head. In one hand she held a scepter; what seemed to be a throne was behind her, but something that surprised Sir Norman most of all was, to find himself standing beside her, the cynosure of all eyes. While he yet gazed in mingled astonishment and incredulity, the scene faded away, and another took its place. This time a dungeon-cell, damp and dismal; walls, floor, and ceiling covered with green and hideous slime. A small lamp stood on the floor, and by its sickly, watery gleam, he saw himself again standing, pale and dejected, near the wall. But he was not alone; some glittering vision in purple and diamonds stood before him, and suddenly he drew his sword and plunged it up to the hilt in her heart! The beautiful vision fell like a stone at his feet, and the sword was drawn out reeking with her life-blood. This was a little too much for the real Sir Norman, and with an expression of indignant consternation, he sprang upright. Instantly it all faded away, and the reflection of his own excited face looked up at him from the caldron.

"I told you not to speak," said La Masque, quietly; "but you must look on still another scene."

Again she threw a portion of the contents of the casket into the caldron, and "spake aloud the words of power." Another cloud of smoke arose and filled the room, and when it cleared away, Sir Norman beheld a third and less startling sight. The scene and place he could not discover, but it seemed to him like night and a storm. Two men were lying on the ground, and bound fast together, it appeared to him. As he looked it faded away, and once more his own face seemed to mock him in the clear water.

"Do you know those two last figures?" asked the lady.

"I do," said Sir Norman, promptly; "it was Ormiston and myself."

"Right! and one of them was dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Sir Norman, with a peremptory start. "Which one, madam?"

"If you cannot tell that, neither can I. If there is anything further you wish to see, I am quite willing to show it to you."

"I'm obliged to you," said Sir Norman, stepping back; "but no more at present, thank you. Do you mean to say, madam, that I'm some day to murder a lady, especially one so beautiful as she I just now saw?"

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"I'm obliged to you," said Sir Norman, stepping back; "but no more at present, thank you. Do you mean to say, madam, that I'm some day to murder a lady, especially one so beautiful as she I just now saw?"

"Do you know those two last figures?" asked the lady.

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"Right! and one of them was dead."

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# THE Saturday JOURNAL

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## THE STORY BEAUTIFUL!

In hand, and soon to run through the columns of the SATURDAY JOURNAL—

## BLACK EYES AND BLUE;

OR,

The Peril of Beauty and the Power of Purity.

A TALE OF COUNTRY AND CITY.

BY CORINNE CUSHMAN.

A most enchanting and absorbing story of two half-sisters—village belles—who, by a startling episode, drift apart to fates that test womanhood like metal in the crucible. Young women and young men have a strongly drawn portraiture, and city life, as an ambitious and almost desperate country girl sees it, has an exciting and impressive delineation. The contrasts between beauty and purity—black eyes and blue—city and country—offer a rapid succession of very peculiar incidents and situations which betray both the art and the power of the true author. It is, in more than one respect, the finest serial story that has appeared in the popular weekly press for a long time.

## Sunshine Papers.

### His Chapter of Experience.

"GOING in the country, to live? My dear fellow, have you ever tried it? No? Then let me give you a chapter of my experience."

And he put his morning paper upon his knees and his facial expression would have made the fortune of any artist who could have reproduced it as that of Dives returned from Hades, to warn his brethren against settling there.

"We had lived in town most of our lives, Mrs. Tritkins and I," he proceeded to say, "but we were fond of the country, and believed it the best place in which to bring up children, and that we could live there more economically than in the city; and as we had kept our establishment in a modest way, and had saved enough money to invest in a little home, we decided it should be a cozy little nest among green trees and babbling brooks. We talked of the matter day and night; my cigar bill really decreased during those weeks; the only use I made of my dailies was to search real estate columns; I dwelt with delight upon the plethora that should affect my bank account; I omitted reproving Charles Henry when Mrs. Tritkins overheard him using slang and punishing John Samuel when he told me a lie, because the youngsters would soon improve in the healthier moral atmosphere of the country; I smiled benignly upon Mrs. Tritkins when she grew eloquent over the table she should set—always loaded with choice fresh fruits and vegetables—and waxed joyful over the decrease of work that would take place in regard to the cherubic wardrobes; I harangued all my friends upon the wisdom of my example until I often wondered why I did not understand sooner my falling off of custom that spring; and if I had succeeded in converting every one to my way of thinking the population of the city would have been reduced to recluse old bachelors and antediluvian schoolmarmers.

"Three cars conveyed our household effects to the regions of the blessed. We left nothing behind, for we should never return. To the country went marble slabs and gas fixtures, carpets three sizes too large for the largest room in our new home, pier-glassed and cornices, stacks of old crinoline and boxes of seddy shoes. Everything would be of some use in the country. And, finally, we were deposited—bootjacks, bonnet-boxes, children, tinware—And, by Jove! you never saw a house that needed such cleaning and repairing! For weeks we lived in a depressing atmosphere of soap-suds and lime, while our nerves were well nigh ruined by the ripping, cutting and pounding processes that carpe's shades and furniture had to undergo before they would agree with their new scenes of duty. But that did end at last, though it seemed as if the influx of bills never would—for cartage, freightage, cleaning, carpentering, painting, gardening—nor the ingress of new servants; although Mrs. Tritkins insists that we did not try over six weeks for five weeks, and one week for the next eighteen months. She is such a conscientious woman her version must be correct.

"Well, my dear man, of that life cannot be equal'd outside of purgatory—making some little allowance for there being such a place! I reached my country home e'ryight at eight o'clock, ate my country supper at nine, tumbled into my country bed at ten, and enjoyed country music until eleven—a full chorus! Frogs sung bass (spelled as pronounced) locusts did the tenor, (but ten or even fifty doesn't express their numbers) katydids chanted the alto, and musketoes never tired of assuming the soprano parts. The alarm clock aroused me punctually at five A. M., and the red-letter days were when I succeeded in getting a bite of toast before sailing for the train. To my agonies were added my wife's distress that the children were growing wild, rough, and vulgar; the boys came home with clothes redolent of dust, besmeared with mud, torn in a dozen places; the girls climbed fences and trees, tore the dresses off all their backs, and talked in dialect. Vegetables were more difficult to obtain than in the city and fruit cost double. Marketing was inconvenient, and all provisions were astonishingly high-priced. If it rained the roads were all mud, if it did not rain when you put your foot down in the dust you wondered what part of China it came in close contact with. If we did not make calls we were

reported 'stuck up,' when we paid visits we were 'all the time gadding.' We could not make our lives exemplary enough to suit our neighbors; and they knew much more about our private affairs than we did ourselves.

"We tried it over two summers, and then we just 'got up and got it.' The second summer I had my own garden and gardener, and kept a horse that I might save my half-mile walk to and from the station and that wife might get more air; and I came back to town in debt, with a jaded-out wife, wild children who were scarcely in a higher class in street grammar school than when they left it, and myself a victim to the vilest twinges of rheumatism and dyspepsia!

"That was eight years ago, my boy; and Mrs. Tritkins and I have never yet so far recovered from the demoralization of that experiment as to be able to hear a person urge the wisdom of living out of town without desiring a desire to consign that wretched individual to regions of perpetual summer in a far country. Oh! be warned, be warned, sir, in time! A divided existence is not conducive to a man's well being! If you must be here at your work, stick to it; and let the country suffice for a summer play-place, is my advice!"

And I came straight home and wrote down the chapter of his experience—for you!

A FARSON'S DAUGHTER.

## MISTAKES.

MISTAKES will happen in spite of all our endeavors to prevent them. Yet many a mistake might be prevented were we to endeavor a little more not to have them occur.

It is a grave mistake to bring up a child with such strictness and severity as to cause the poor creature to have no comfort in its home, and to think any place far preferable to it. I know of a case where the discipline of a household was so strict as to cause fear to take the place of love in the feelings of the children toward their parents, and when one or two of these children went astray, after they had grown up, the parents should have felt how grave a mistake they had made in keeping so tight a check-rein upon them. They may have thought they were doing their "duty" by their offspring, but is it a parent's duty to crush out all sunshine and pleasure in the hearts of their children—to forbid them reading good books? Is it a parent's duty to make Sunday a bugbear to the household—to allow no smile to appear on any of the countenances—to cast a funeral gloom over the premises, until one hates the very day to come? I once heard one of these over-particular beings tell his son that it would always be Sunday in heaven, and I didn't wonder that his little hopeful replied that he "didn't want to go there then, for he could not sit still all the time as he was obliged to be once a week."

It is a grave mistake to imagine that we are doing others as we would have others do unto us, when we are so prone to comment on the short-comings of those whom we have about us, and say evil things behind their backs that we would never dare to say before their faces. To murder them with unkind words and cruel actions—to allow others to suppose they are worse than they actually are—to put stones in their way for them to trip over—to see others being wrecked in the sea of dissipation and drunkenness and stretch forth no hand to save them, but to let them drown before our very eyes and we wall on, thanking God we are not as others are, and feeling free from all blame, when we know we are sinning by not endeavoring to save others from going to destruction.

It is a grave mistake for us to make believe we do not care for the slights put upon us—that we have a contempt for those who are poorer or not so well born as we happen to be, because the rich cannot live without the poor, and the poor cannot live without the rich, each are dependent upon the other. It is work of the poor that fills the coffers of the rich, and it is the rich man's money that gives life to the poor.

It is a sad mistake to think many of us can exist without doing something for our support—that the world owes us a living, and we shall have payment for doing nothing. Thus it is that so many value their situations so little; yet, when the panic comes and times are hard, there are tens of thousands in the receipt of good salaries are discharged, and wander from store to store, willing to do anything for ever so little, so that they and those near and dear ones who are dependent upon them for support, shall not starve. This is the time when one discovers that the idea of sitting still and doing nothing is not the way to make the world pay the living it owes. Some of these wanderers who search for work have discovered it to be a mistake to have lived so extravagantly, when business was good and not put by anything for the inevitable "rainy day," so often overtakes the best. A little saved here and there will soon tell, and when the rainy days come a well filled pocket-book is a pretty good umbrella. There is no mistake about that.

It is a strange mistake many persons make in supposing they are reconciling hearts that are drifting away from each other by opening the old sores and letting them bleed afresh by repeating to them every bit of gossip and scandal that is floating around. That is no way to keep lovers and their betrothed, husbands and wives together. They are poor comforters who are prone to do so, and the sooner they are brought to their senses and see the matter in the true light, the less divorces will there be and the more happy homes will abound. It doesn't seem to me as though any one could have harsh feelings after reading Will Carleton's lines:

"So I think you had better be kind,  
And I had best be true;  
And let the old love do on;  
Just as it used to do."

EVE LAWLESS.

The following extract from a letter to us from Dayton, Ohio, makes so good a "point" we may be permitted to quote:

"I have just received your paper for nearly four weeks, and must say I like it one of the best papers of its kind published in this country. I have always been taught to abhor fiction, in whatever shape, and I always held aloof from it until I got your paper, when I found that as compared with the daily papers it was quite as sound. The 'patriotic' day is so ridiculous and mischievous, I wonder what one can trust? They are 'vicious' but with that species of vigor that the Evil Genius betrays in making his eau de god. I am so sick of them all and have been, and turned to your paper as a change, and see what now see is the only kind of 'realism' which I ever thought was an entrance to the home circle, for it is bright, sparkling, entertaining and instructive; it gratifies and satisfies the taste for good reading, of a varied character, and I can only say I wish every household in the land could see it come within its doors."

We hope by continuing to maintain its standard and adding constantly to its attractions, to see the SATURDAY JOURNAL in every household where the weekly paper finds a welcome. These dull times are telling severely on some of the weeklies, but we are most happy to say, our lists are constantly growing—our readers increasing, week by week.

## Foolscap Papers.

### Letter from the Black Hills.

The Black Hills gold fever suddenly took me with both hands, and I instantly began to make preparations for the trip, although my wife told me the Indians would kill me on the way, and she knew she couldn't get over such a thing for a year.

"We tried it over two summers, and then we just 'got up and got it.' The second summer I had my own garden and gardener, and kept a horse that I might save my half-mile walk to and from the station and that wife might get more air; and I came back to town in debt,

with a jaded-out wife, wild children who were scarcely in a higher class in street grammar school than when they left it, and myself a victim to the vilest twinges of rheumatism and dyspepsia!

Knowing that provisions would be scarce there, I tried to accustom myself to doing without fresh bread three times a day, and succeeded, but it was at a terrible expense for other victuals.

Jones took the fever in the same region that I did, and we both began to school ourselves together for the trip. We took long journeys on foot, often going around three or four squares to get used to walking, without stopping to rest more than two or three times, carrying packs, and wearing slouched hats, and our pants in our boots.

We practiced with guns in our yard at an Indian chinked on the stable door, knowing that we would be likely to have plenty of that kind of diversion on the route, and sometimes when Jones would aim the gun and I would pull the trigger we came near hitting it—we would have hit it often if it had been a real Indian and it had jumped a little aside, as Indians will do when they see the flash of a rifle in their direction.

When we got ready to start, a great many we sent to the depot to see us start. All our creditors were there, and every one prayed for our success in the most earnest manner.

We left the Pacific railroad at Cheyenne, and started at once for the Hills on foot, carrying our provisions along, but we had none to sell. We had each a pair of steel-yards to weigh chunks of gold, and a big blank-book to put the weight down in. These books would hold a great many figures—more than you could imagine.

We had revolvers strapped all about us, and each carried a double-barreled rifle of great value.

It was a great bore to carry them.

We met no one going, but a great number coming back. They all said they were coming in to get wagons to go back after the gold they had dug.

One night the Indians attacked us. We threw ourselves into a solid square and received them with a discharge of open arms. The battle lasted three hours. Jones was shot in the shoulder—of meat which he carried on his back. I received two shots in the side—of bacon which he carried in my pack. Jones then cut his handkerchief to a stick and raised it as a flag of truce, but the Indians mistaking it for the black flag, charged once again, during which Jones received a painful shot in the leg—of dried venison, and I a minie-ball in the back—of a book on Indian etiquette. But we had to surrender at indiscretion. However, when they took our hats off and found us both to be bald-headed, they uttered a cry of dismay, and said some other Indians had scalped us before they met us, and walked away, scratching their heads, and were soon lost in the dimness of distance.

One of the most serious accidents occurred to us as we were crossing a stream on a log. The log rolled over and we went under. Three times we sunk, and it looked like it was all over, or under, with us; we were about gone, when Jones caught me by the collar, and I caught him by the collar, and we dragged each other to the shore; there, by the most heroic exertions in working with each other, we brought each other to, and the heartfelt thanks we lavished on each other were many in the extreme. Let him remember that Kane, who withstood the Arctic winters, was killed by the warm air of Cuba. He should come at once to Colorado, or to a climate of equal altitude and salubrity. But even he should approach it slowly, resting, as it were, on the various rounds of the ladder, and gradually accustoming his lungs to the atmosphere of these regions. For such a one, if he will take proper precautions, there is abundant hope." Very sensible advice, we should say. A sudden change of all the conditions of living can never be otherwise than injurious.

—Charles Matthews, the comedian, was served by a green-grocer named Berry, and generally settled his bill once a month. At one time the account was sent in before it was due, and Matthews, laboring under an idea that his credit was doubted, said: "Here's a pretty bill, Berry. You have sent in your bill, Berry, before it was due, Berry. Your father, the elder Berry, would not have been such a good Berry, Berry, for I don't care a straw, Berry, and I shan't pay you till Christmas, Berry." Which a darkey would call "berry good." The only thing we have against Matthews is that he came over here, stayed long enough to win away another comedian's wife and decamp with her. The joke in that no one could see that he was really glad to see you.

—One way of conducting a spelling bee in England is to let one person begin with a letter. The next one must add to it, having a complete word in his head, and so on, until some one finishes whatever word may eventually be manufactured. Says a writer in the *Court Circular*: "It is astonishing how unfamiliar certain common combinations of letters sound when said in this way. Thus I heard of a bee, held in a commercial room of a large hotel, when the word 'hat' had got as far as 'ZIN.' 'What on earth can that be the beginning of?' said the next man; 'and he was so convinced there was no such word in the language, he began to challenge the last speaker—that is, asked him to complete the word. 'Zine' was the answer, and the man upon the pun jumped up with a spasm of agony. 'By Jove,' he said, 'and I travelled in it myself.' That was the last word he represented a hardware firm, and sold zinc every day he was there."

—From time immemorial it has been the varying rule of good society in Europe that when a gentleman enters any parlor but his own, whether to pay a visit of ceremony or of business, or to attend a dinner party or an evening party, he must carry his hat in his hand. His overcoat and cane may be left in the ante-room, but his hat he must take with him. In the United States, on the other hand, the contrary usage prevails, the hat being left outside with the overcoat; so that in an American salon one can generally determine whether a visitor is an American or a European by the circumstance of his having his hat or not having it.

—A computation of the time required for the formation of a vein of coal has been made by Mr. E. A. Wunsch, of the Glasgow Geological Society, based upon his own observations in the Isle of Arran. He thinks that as many as twenty generations of trees are compressed into three to four inches of coal there, and that eighteen centuries are requisite for the formation of one foot of coal. We are, therefore, literally consuming centuries in every scuttle of coal on the fire. If the wonderful carboniferous era hadn't come along to grow gigantic forests out of which to make the coal seams, what a failure this age of steam and iron would have been! How wisely, indeed, has the good God ordained all things!

THOUGHTS come into our minds by avenues which we never left open, and thoughts go out of our minds through avenues which we never voluntarily opened.

## Topics of the Time.

### Foolscap Papers.

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We practiced with guns in our yard at an Indian chinked on the stable door, knowing that we would be likely to have plenty of that

IN JUNETIME.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

Under the trees in the Junetime I lie,  
And we whisper together, sweet Nature and I.  
Over my head, in the wide, azure arch,  
I see the cloud-armies go out on a march.  
Here is a straggler, and there a recruit,  
Both clad in the white of the cloud-soldier's suit.  
I see, flying up from the green earth below,  
A messenger-bird, who bears tidings, I know,  
To the sentinel clouds who are watching the  
world.  
From the crags where the flags of the sky are  
unfurled.

The wind whispers softly a secret to me;  
It has seen the first rose of June kissed by a bee!  
And it says that the violets blow on the hills,  
Where the air is astir with the ripple of rills,  
And the song of the robin, and carol of wren.  
Who are happy to-day with the children of men.

I hear the roots growing, all hidden away,  
When I lie down and listen, this happy June  
day.

I see in the grass, where the brown crickets hide  
Rehearsing a concert for eventide.

I would be a bird to fly up at the gates of day.

And beat my wings at the gates of day.

I would be a cloud to go floating far,  
And bask in the smile of the Evening Star.

I would be a wind from the passionate south,  
Sweet as a kiss from a dainty mouth.

I would be a bee to woo the rose  
Till its fragrant heart to my lips uncloses.

But were I a blossom, a bird, or bee,  
What would my love do for loss of me?

Without a Heart:

WALKING ON THE BRINK.

A STORY OF LIFE'S SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

BY COLONEL PRENTISS INGRAHAM,  
AUTHOR OF "GIVEN FOR GOLD," "THE FLYING YANKEE," "THE MEXICAN SPY,"  
"TRACKED THROUGH LIFE."

CHAPTER XVIII.

WILDWILDE.

UPON the sea-washed shore of a sunny southern State was Wildwilde, the new home of Colonel Erskine.

A more beautiful home heart could not desire, for the villa was a handsome, commodious structure, with deep bay-windows and broad piazzas, and from its front and east wing a broad view of the ocean could be obtained with jutting points and wooded isles up and down the coast.

Around the mansion, to the south and west, were a lovely lawn and flower-garden, while to the northward ranged an extensive park of lordly trees, through which bounded a number of graceful deer, led by a fleet-footed monarch of the forest, with large spreading antlers and nimble feet.

Back of the mansion, at some distance, were the stable and out-houses, built upon a similar plan to the house, and a quarter of a mile away, forming a crescent around the white beach of a small bay; were a score of neat-looking cottages, the "quarters" of the servants of Wildwilde.

A fountain here and there, a piece of marble statuary, white shell walks, flower-bespangled beds, and rolling lawns of velvet grass, with the constantly-changing ocean scenery, rendered the surroundings of Wildwilde beautiful indeed, while Gothic and rustic summer-houses invited loungers into their cool and quiet retreats.

Running out into the water, some fifty feet, was a neat pier, with a small arbor upon the end, and here there were arranged comfortable seats, for those who cared to watch the restless waters coming in from the sea beyond.

Around the pier, gently rising and falling upon the waters, were a small pleasure-yacht and several gayly painted row-boats, with velvet cushions and striped awnings, which rendered them most comfortable.

Entering the grand and massive looking mansion, on every side was luxury, and everywhere an air of comfort prevailed, from the broad hallway to the spacious parlors, inviting library, and cool and extensive dining-room.

Up-stairs were the sleeping chambers, large, convenient, luxuriously furnished, and sufficient in number to accommodate a score of guests, for the former master of Wildwilde was a genial and hospitable host—far too much so for his own good.

In the large bow-window, an open book upon her lap, sat a maiden.

So completely metamorphosed was Everard Ainslie, from a handsome, graceful youth of twenty, apparently, into a lovely, brilliant maiden of eighteen, that none would have recognized her.

Dressed in a morning-robe of white lawn, that fitted her elegant form to perfection, and with her massive braids of hair fastened with a silver comb in one coil at the back of her haughty head, Eve Ainslie was indeed a wonderfully lovely woman—one that few men could gaze upon unmoved by her charms.

Upon her quiet features there was no ruffle of discontent—no footprints of an embittered life—no sign that her life was a lie—her face was an impenetrable mask.

She had cast the die—she had made a false confession, and her words had been believed by those who loved her.

By the falsehood she had gained a lovely home, a kind father, a loving brother—and wealth.

But she still had not gained all these, for she had been sincere in her confession—had she told the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Such would the "still, small voice" of her conscience sometimes ask her, and she had to admit, knowing as she did both Colonel Erskine and his noble son, that their kindness toward her would have been the same, even though she was a deserted wife.

But then it was not politic for Eve to have it known that she was otherwise than she had said she was, for she was playing for a higher game than she had so far won—a game, to gain which, she would have to break the laws of God and man; but, what cared a woman *without* heart for these?

For several weeks had Colonel Erskine and Eve been in their new home, enjoying to their heart's content the balmy air of the South, the perfume of the innumerable flowers, the sweet trilling of feathered songsters, gliding over the rippling waters, and indulging in literary and musical feasts in the library and music-room.

So calmly, so softly, did the days glide away in this Eden-like home; so loving, so kind, was Eve, that Colonel Erskine almost ceased to

mourn for poor Florice, for his newly-adopted daughter proved to him all that he could wish, and he thanked God for the day when she crossed his path, for to her he owed it that his days, gliding toward the grave, were not passed in gloom and despair.

CHAPTER XIX.

LA BELLE COQUETTE.

As the days glided by at Wildwilde the neighboring families called upon the new-comers, and Colonel Erskine and Eve soon found themselves as general favorites.

This was just what Eve most desired, for she was anxious to prove still further the power she felt that she possessed over men; but, with Colonel Erskine it was different, for he had been happy in the dreamy life he had led for a few weeks after his arrival at Wildwilde.

Still he was a most hospitable host, and was fond of company, and therefore greeted all visitors in his genial, kindly manner.

As the beau of the surrounding country began to flock around her, Eve Ainslie launched forth upon the fathomless sea of coquetry, and day after day threw her chains of love's bondage around some new admirer, holding him as she had held all others, her very slave.

With her triumph her joy and her ambition arose—joy that she could lay her hand upon the mane of any one of society's lions and cause him to kneel at her feet, and ambition to still further ascend the grade of victory, that when Clarence Erskine came to Wildwilde, upon his promised visit, he would find her a queen over all, and one who held full sway over men and women alike.

Quickly through the land flew the news of her beauty, her wit, her scathing sarcasm, and everywhere were her splendid horsemen, her superb voice, her skill as a musician, and other accomplishments discussed, while the name of *La Belle Coquette* was bestowed upon her by a gay bachelor planter, who had never been dazzled by the beauties of Europe, but had come home to be flattered by an American girl.

But one of Eve's strong points in coquetry was never to make an enemy of a discarded lover, for, did she refuse his love, she made him feel that she really *needed* his friendship, and in this way she held her power over them still, and kept them fluttering around the flame of her beauty and wit like poor candle-flies, anxious, seemingly, to receive injury from so brilliant a destroyer.

The young bachelor, above referred to, lived alone on a superb estate, left him by his parents' death, ere he was of age.

Passing a number of years in Europe, Paul Launcelot had at last returned home, at the age of thirty, to re-t after his wanderings, and a few months after his arrival Eve Ainslie had risen above the horizon of his life, and drawn him at once to her side, though many a fair maiden of the neighborhood had given up all idea of ever netting his obdurate heart, for he escaped all love-traps set for him.

When at last his heart was smitten, Paul Launcelot went by the board, for he became Eve Ainslie's very shadow.

At length the telling of the same old story came, and the bachelor planter was—refused.

Yet so kindly, so affectionately, almost, did Eve refuse the proffer of the three treasures terribly sought after by many of her sex—his heart, his hand, and his fortune—that she attached him to her as her *best friend*, so she told him he should be, and with that honor Paul Launcelot was compelled to be content, and almost seemed so, while, in a quiet way, he enjoyed seeing other men sing their wings and flutter back wounded and mournful.

One bright morning, when the inmates of Wildwilde awoke, they saw a trim-looking vessel-of-war anchored out in the little bay, it having sought shelter there during the darkness of the preceding night.

On that vessel Eve Ainslie soon found two more admirers—the one Captain Burt Lambert, a dashing, handsome young sailor of twenty-six, and the commander of the rakish-looking revenue cutter Eagle—the other Howard Moulton, first lieutenant of the Eagle, and a step-brother of his captain, for the widower father of Howard had married the widowed mother of Burt, when the latter was a mere boy of six, and the former ten years his senior.

As soon as breakfast was over, the morning after the arrival of the Eagle in the bay, Colonel Erskine had summoned his six negro oarsmen, and gone on board the cutter, where he was warmly welcomed by Captain Lambert, who informed him that he had been ordered to that part of the coast, to watch for certain illegal traffickers upon the sea.

From that day both Burt Lambert and Howard Moulton became constant visitors at Wildwilde, and before one week passed the brothers were desperately in love with Eve Ainslie, who almost seemed momentarily dazzled by the splendid appearance and glittering uniform of the handsome young sea captain, for her kindness toward him made many a brave heart ache.

CHAPTER XX.

FACE TO FACE.

One pleasant afternoon, some weeks after the arrival of the Eagle in the little bay, Captain Burt Lambert was rowed to the pier at Wildwilde, and, landing, sent his card in to Miss Erskine, for, at the urgent desire of her adopted father, Eve had dropped her own name of Ainslie.

Soon the maid in appeared, looking queenly beautiful in her dark-blue riding-habit and hat and plume, for she had made an engagement with the young captain for a gallop over the country.

Soon the horses were brought round, two of the finest in the Wildwilde stables, and mounting, away dashed the handsome couple, anxiously eyed from the library window by Colonel Erskine, for, though he admired the young commander exceedingly, he dreaded lest Eve should learn to love him, a result he prayed against most sincerely, for he had hoped that Clarence would love the maiden when he saw her metamorphosed from the youth whose life he had so ably defended from the merciless clutches of the oakened law.

Down a lovely road, heavily wooded upon one side by the dense firs, and containing a view of the bay and ocean upon the other, rode the officer and his fair companion, his face slightly clouded, her face bright, tinged with the excitement of her ride, and as serenely beautiful as though no storm-clouds of sorrow and trouble had swept over it.

Out upon the bosom of the bay, her delicate spars and rigging traced against the blue sky beyond, lay the Eagle at anchor, fully a league away.

Pointing toward his beautiful vessel, Captain Lambert said, with some enthusiasm:

"Miss Erskine, for years past I have known but one lady-love—my vessel."

"When a mere boy, a midshipman on a vessel-of-war cruising in foreign seas, I never felt

homesick, for I looked upon my ship as my home; and when I at length rose in rank, and was detached from the navy and ordered to the command of a revenue cutter, my little Eagle became my home and my love—my heart's dearest idol."

"It is strange that yourself and brother should both be on the same vessel," said Eve, quietly, as if desiring to draw the captain away from a tender subject.

"Yes; but I am glad it is so, for I love Howard dearly."

"You know that we are step-brothers, and that he is ten years my senior?"

"Yes, and I like Lieutenant Moulton exceedingly."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Miss Erskine, for poor Howard has had a rather unhappy life."

"Indeed! will you tell me?"

"There is little to tell, excepting that he entered the navy at an early age, and was rising rapidly in his profession, when a quarrel with his superior officer ended in a duel, in which he fell by Howard's hands."

"There were palliating circumstances in the case of Howard's behalf; but he was dismissed from the service; and I am sorry to say, became reckless and dissipated, and in a few years ran through his fortune, and was almost penniless in the world."

"At length, through the influence of our family, he was appointed to the command of the Eagle, in the revenue service, for he had reformed completely when he had no more means at his disposal."

"Unfortunately I was ordered to the Eagle shortly after, and ranking Howard, of course took command—he showing no ill-feeling toward me whatever, and to-day we are the best of friends, as well as brothers, and no better officer than Howard Moulton treads a ship's deck."

"Your loves and hatreds are doubtless very strong, Captain Lambert—at least such is my estimate of you," said Eve, and as though a mad thought had been unwittingly thrown into power.

"Report says he is worth millions—that he has an only daughter and an only son—and my Eve is that daughter."

"I must solve this mystery—I will solve it, for she will tell me all, for did she not ask me to call?"

"Strange that she should, in one glance, regain her influence over me, for I believe I would be her slave, did she so bid me."

"And, by Heaven! how beautiful she has grown!" She is a perfect queen, and I do not wonder now that the men of the neighborhood have gone mad with love for Eve Erskine.

"I must solve this mystery—I will solve it, for she will tell me all, for did she not ask me to call?"

"Oh, God! how the memory of that fatal night haunts me over me; but I must smother remorse for I have not the cowardly heart to let despair crush me down."

"Yes, I will tell Eve, in part, the truth—how my ship had been my home, my lady-love."

"Now I tell you that I would see my loved vessel and all it contains wrecked upon yonder jagged and wild reef rather than lose your love, even your friendship—"

"It is getting late; suppose we return, captain," and Eve brought her spirited horse to the right-about, her companion following her example, while a shadow of disappointment swept over his face.

"As they turned, a horseman suddenly confronted them, having been riding but a short distance behind, and unseen by both Burt and Eve."

"One glance into that dark, strangely handsome face, and upon that elegant, graceful form, and Eve's face turned deadly pale, while she reined in, as though about to fall from her saddle."

The horseman's face also changed color, and well it might, for Eve Ainslie and Claude Clinton had again crossed each other's path—yes, those two, so strangely met, so strangely parted; husband and wife had again come face to face!

CHAPTER XXI.

CLINTON CLARENDON.

WITH a tremendous effort of self-control, Eve regained her composure, and gave Claude Clinton a cool stare, as though she never had before met him, while upon his part, he seemed as though about to speak; but, guided by her manner, touched his hat politely, and passed by, on one side.

In a moment Claude Clinton had continued on, while Eve said, quietly:

"Are you acquainted with the gentleman to whom you just bowed, Captain Lambert?"

"Incidentally only," almost impatiently returned the young peer, who felt that his *et-à-ete* with Eve had been interrupted at a most inopportune moment for his love-making.

Eve was about to inquire still further into the acquaintance, when Captain Lambert continued, for he felt that he had spoken abruptly perhaps.

"A few days since Mr. Clarendon, for such is the name of the gentleman, was passing the anchorage of the Eagle, in a small yacht, and a squall coming up he split his mainsail, and I haled him to come aboard and repair damages.

"He accepted the invitation, and while my seamstress mended the rent, I invited the gentleman into the cabin, and over a glass of wine found him a most agreeable companion."

"Is he a resident of this neighborhood?"

"Yes; or that is, he told me he lived on a plantation several leagues down the coast—one he had lately purchased, I judged from his conversation; but you seem singularly interested in a stranger!" and a pang of jealousy flashed into the heart of the young officer.

"He reminds me of one I have known well in the past. You say his name is Clarendon?"

"Yes, Clinton Clarendon—such was the name on the card he gave me—ha! here he comes back, and at a gallop."

As Captain Lambert spoke there was heard the sound of quickly clattering hoofs, and a moment after up dashed the same horseman whom they had just met.

Drawing rein, and politely raising his hat, he said, addressing Captain Lambert:

"Pardon me, sir; but a small row-boat, with the name *Eve* painted on its stern, drifted ashore upon my beach last night; can I ask if it was not the property of the lady with you?"

And was Tom well, sir? Was he still mindful of old Ben? And where was he, sir, when he gave you the message for me?"

The stranger started, but, after a moment's hesitation, replied:

"Tom was well, and always spoke of you with the warmest affection. When I saw him, some months ago, he was far away from this! But Tom has been fortunate, since he was here."

"Fortunate? And how, sir? I know he had good luck in some things, but to what do you refer?"

"He has had a good deal of money left him," replied the stranger, quietly, glancing at the old man.

"I'm glad, indeed, to hear it, sir," said Ben, promptly; "for if ever man deserved the smiles of heaven, Tom Worth was that man! Tell you the truth, Mr. Morton," and he drew his chair confidentially toward the richly-clad gentleman, "there was something strange about Tom—that boy of mine. He was wonderful book-learned, sir, and though he had thews of steel and muscles of iron, and a fist that could shiver an inch-thick oak plank, yet that hand, though he worked in the mine, was always so white, so fine, so like a *gentleman's* sir, that I often thought, though I didn't say it, that Tom was not exactly what he seemed to be. And then, Mr. Morton, Tom was so gentle, so respectful, sir, to the women. And I tell you, sir, that such a man is a *true man*, and one does not forget he has had a mother, sir."

The stranger listened intently, his eyes fixed on the old man's face—those eyes wet still.

"You speak words of wisdom, my friend," he said in a low voice, one deeply enthusiastic from emotion, "and you are right—such men are true men."

"Yes, Mr. Morton; and Tom Worth was one of them! And then, too, in a rough-and-tumble, my stars, sir! he was a perfect lion, and—But do you know his story, sir? He had a little trouble hereabouts!"

The old man spoke cautiously.

"Yes," replied the stranger; "I know Tom Worth's story, every word, and I know, too, that Tom was innocent."

"Innocent? Of course he was! And he would be a brave man, as I have said more than once, who would contradict me! Though—though—truth be told, for a long time, Tom himself would not say whether or not he was."

"Perhaps he had his reasons," suggested Mr. Morton, softly.

"Of course, sir, of course!" was the reply. "That was Tom! Reasons for everything, and good ones! God be thanked that I have heard from him again!"

A silence of some minutes ensued, the stranger bending his head in thought, old Ben sitting with his eyes half closed, a pleasant smile spreading over his kin countenance as his mind, doubtlessly, was traveling back over the past. The old man was thinking of Tom Worth, and the other was thinking of—what?

Suddenly the old man broke the silence by saying:

"You have brought me news, Mr. Morton—good, glorious news for me, and for the same for another!" and he glanced familiarly at the stranger, as if confiding a confidence.

Mr. Morton started; his face flushed slightly, and his mustached lip trembled. But he asked, quietly:

"What do you mean, Mr. Walford?"

"Why, sir, there can be no harm in telling you, for you are Tom's friend. Why, sir, Tom was a handsome lad, and he had, truth be told, a wondrous way with the women. And, sir—why Tom was in love, and in love with a rich man's daughter."

The old man paused.

Mr. Morton drew still nearer to the miner, his gaze fixed upon him earnestly, expectantly.

"Well, Mr. Walford?"

"And, sir, the girl—God bless her for a noble woman—loved Tom more than any plain, blunt words of mine can tell you, sir. And she would have married Tom in spite of everything had my boy stayed; but, poor thing, man's daughter."

Again the old man paused.

Mr. Morton was now showing signs of excitement. He placed his hand upon the old man's arm, and said, in a deep whisper:

"Yes, yes, Mr. Walford; what of this poor girl, who loved the humble Tom Worth of those days?"

"Why, sir, poor thing, she has almost grieved herself to death after him. In spite of all I could say and swear to her, she believes Tom is dead—was drowned, sir. Why—would you believe it—she has been wearing black for Tom for these two years past! Don't that show love, sir? Again I say, may God bless that woman!"

"Amen!" echoed Mr. Morton, and a tear dimmed his eye; nor did the turning of his head conceal his emotion from old Ben.

"And now, sir, the other part of your good news," said the miner, softly, "is that I can tell Miss Grace positively that Tom is *not* dead, and that perhaps, nay, *I know it, sir!* that, though he is rich now, yet he is true to her still!"

"Ay, my friend! True to the death!" said the stranger, somewhat vehemently—so much so, indeed, that old Ben glanced at him quickly.

"But," continued Mr. Morton, as he saw the effect of his words, "it will not do now to tell the—thin young lady of me. We will wait; I have my reasons."

"Of course, sir, of course. And I am so glad to hear from Tom; I'd almost be willing to die without ever more seeing old England if my eyes could fall on Tom. God grant it."

"You may see him yet, Mr. Walford, who knows?" said the stranger, quickly. "But, he continued, as if recollecting himself, "I have with me a letter from Tom for you. Here it is," and he drew it from his pocket and handed it over.

The old man took it with an air almost reverential; fondled it for a moment in his large hands, and gazed affectionately at the superscription.

"Yes, 'tis from Tom!" he muttered; "I know his writing—so clear, so strong and fine, like printing! But, sir, my old eyes are dim; read that letter for me. I would not miss a single word for ten dollars in gold! Read it, sir, for me. If you are a friend of Tom Worth, and I believe you are, there can be no secret in it from you. Read it, Mr. Morton; for, though your beard is white, your eyes—I know it—are younger and sharper than mine."

The stranger started at these words, and a smile flashed over his face; but, he took the letter, opened it, and spread out the sheet. As he did so, several bank-notes fell down. The stranger quietly picked them up and laid them on the table.

The old miner looked at the money, and then bowed his head.

"I will read Tom's letter if you are ready," said Mr. Morton, after a pause, in a low voice.

"Read, read on, sir," and the old man did not raise his head.

After another moment's hesitation, the stranger read in a steady, but subdued voice, as follows:

"DEAR BEN:

"God be thanked that I can write to you again, and tell you that I have not forgotten you! Though many long months have rolled by since we parted on the banks of the Ohio, yet Ben's name is still on my tongue, underlined much since I last saw you, suffered much, but through all I have remembered you, the only true friend I ever had! I am far away now, Ben—far away from you and your dear old cabin on the hillside where you and your 'boy' have passed so many happy, honest hours together."

The stranger's voice wavered; old Ben's glass frame shook like an aspen leaf.

"And, Ben, it may be," resumed the stranger, reading from the letter, "that we will never more meet there. If such should be the case, then to the value of one hundred pounds—the money of your native land—old England, so dear to you, I can afford it, Ben; it comes a free gift from one who loves you more tenderly than any other to Godfrey. But I cannot say 'ever' but, should it be decreed that we meet no more on earth, do you part as a God-fearing man to meet me in the better land. May God bless you!"

For five minutes there was a complete silence; and then, as if fearing to speak, the minor slowly raised his tear-bedewed face.

"I'll do it, Tom! I'll do it!" he whispered, in a deep tone, as if addressing the shade of his absent friend. "Trust me, Tom, for, with God's help, I will do it—will do *all*, *anything* to meet you again, my noble boy!"

He took the notes, pressed them silently to his lips, and placed them away in his bosom, as if they were souvenirs too sacred to place elsewhere.

The stranger's bosom heaved; his own stalwart frame shook; a pearly tear dropped down, and then another, and another, on his long white beard. He laid the open letter on the table, and rising, turned without a word to the door.

Suddenly, however, quick as lightning, he faced the old man, and as he raised his tall form, his chest rising and falling tumultuously, he cried aloud:

"BEN!"

One wild, startled look, a convulsive gasping, and the old man reeled and fell forward, his brawny arms, now nerveless, clutching the other passionately around the neck.

"God be praised!" was all old Ben could say, as he drew the form of the richly-clad stranger to his bosom, and held him there in a giant's grasp.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 318.)

#### A DREAM OF PEARLS.

BY F. X. HALIFAX.

I dreamed one night, one beautiful night, That I was away on the shore of Ceylon; And I saw the palm trees—heavenly sight— Waving above me, one by one—

And I saw the ocean, the blue, the sea, Silver strong— A diver searching for hidden pearls—

And my comrades sang an orient song; 'E'en now before me the vision whirls; E'en now before me the vision whirls;

And I see the wild-eyed ocean birds; And I hear the voices swarming in the serpents' crawl; The fairest and rarest pearl of all.

The days of prophecy are not gone; And dreams are true though wild and strange;

And hope, like a tide, comes surging on; That I may some day find the one—

The fairest and rarest of all to me— Somewhere in the treacherous sea,

That forever and ever will be mine;

With eyes like stars and hair like wine, And a form like an angel's—somewhere, yes, in the sea of life, dark, fathomless.

The lamp was restored to the table, and the next moment he picked up the lamp and was about to apply its blaze to the papers on the table when he hesitated.

"No!" he said. "This roof has sheltered Helen, and to-night beneath it sleeps one whom she calls sister. I cannot destroy it. I will not deprive her of a shelter. Perhaps, with a glance at his victim, "I have already made her fatherless."

The lamp was restored to the table, and the next moment he picked up the lamp and was about to apply its blaze to the papers on the table when he hesitated.

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ing for him, when Helen's hand fell upon his arm.

"Have you any more news?" she asked. "I have been cooped up in this old house for a fortnight, and have heard but little about the war."

"We are gaining ground everywhere!" said Marion, with a glow of triumph on his sallow cheeks. "Greene is recovering, Cornwallis is marching to his doom in the north, and God is smiling on the colonies. Dorchester will soon be ours. The crippled bird has left Wingdon Hall—"

"What! is Lancaster Wingdon out?" cried Helen.

"Yes. He is hunting for two men!"

"Two men?"

"That boy and a renegade trooper, named Nettleton."

Helen started at mention of the last name.

"Where is the trooper?" she asked.

"I do not know. He slew your father—I mean Hugh Latimer," replied Marion. "Nicholas has doubtless told you about the writing—the last he ever executed—that was found on his table."

"Yes."

"We are hunting for the trooper as well as that one-armed Tory boy. I believe that he carries papers that concern you, Helen. If he means Lancaster Wingdon one or both will die. If Nicholas and the young Tory have a recontre blood will flow."

Marion turned almost abruptly from the young girl and stepped to Hayne's side.

Helen was then joined by Nick of the Night, and the twain were engaged in an earnest conversation when a young negro wormed his way through the partisan band, and handed him a note which was sealed with the waxen crest of Wingdon Hall.

The boy started when the sign met his eye, and Helen watched him with intense curiosity as he stepped toward a torch and broke the seal.

The chirography that met his gaze was elegant and feminine in shading, and in the glow of the torch the young partisan read:

"Nicholas Brandon—*Bandit!* Are we never to meet that we may settle forever the accounts that we owe one another? Like a coward, you fly from me now; but I have strength again. I will give you this, and more by far, if I deliverance that every night at twelve I wait for you at the double oaks near Wingdon Hall. I dare you to meet me there alone, and in this challenge, I brand you coward! bandit! and murderer! Carolina is too small for you and—*Of Wingdon Hall.*"

The reader gritted his teeth when he read the trio of epithets that the challenge contained; but, when the last sentence was mastered, a smile overspread his face.

"That is true, Lancaster Wingdon, that is true!" were the words that rippled over his lips, and folding the paper he returned to Helen.

"I am going away," he said in a tone which did not rouse her suspicions. "The negro's message is important."

He took her hands, and, unseen by the men about them, snatched a hurried kiss from her lips.

"Come!" he said to the sable messenger. "Is he there?"

"He am, massa!" was the reply.

A few moments later the young partisan, mounted on his horse and followed by Whig, the gallant dog, called Marion from his council with Hayne and several trusted lieutenants.

"Good-by, General," said the boy, putting out a hand which Marion took with great surprise. "If I am not in your camp at daybreak you will find me beneath the double oaks near Wingdon Hall. Send no one after me, as you value the tried friendship of Nick o' the Night."

Marion wrung the boy's hand, and gave him a look that seemed to fathom the secret of his sudden departure.

The next moment the twain had separated, and the young partisan and the Wingdon slave were riding away.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 322.)

### TO IRENTHIA.

BY SOLITAIRE.

Oh! bright be thy home on that far distant shore,

Where the glad flowers bloom every month in the year.

Where the south winds come whispering the green valleys o'er.

And the joy-weeping dew-spirit drops its big tear,

When the day-god shall sing amidst islands of roses,

And moonlight shall shame with its radiance the day.

And the zephyr's soft song on the light stream reposes.

Think, sweet lady, think on the friend that's away.

Oh! think on the heart that throbbed for those alone,

Those songs which we sung (oh, the memory is dear).

By that sweet winding river, e'en now the low tone

Of its breathing waves softly, and melts on the ear.

You'll remember, sweet one, when the twilight appears,

And gloriously brilliant the eye-star comes forth,

There are those who are looking through memory's tears

And watching with thee from the cold, distant earth.

Sweet lady, farewell; we may meet nevermore,

But the tear-drop that falls is now telling to me

That come o'er,

And twere Heaven to know I'm remembered by thee.

### OLD DAN RACKBACK.

### The Great Exterminator:

OR,  
THE TRIANGLE'S LAST TRAIL!

BY OLD COOMES,

AUTHOR OF "HAPPY HARRY," "IDAHO TOM,"

"DAKOTA DAN," "OLD HURRICANE,"

"HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC. ETC.

### CHAPTER XIV.

A RETROSPECTION.

In order that we may introduce other important characters to our readers without confusion, it becomes necessary that we now go back a few days beyond the time of the last events recorded and narrate the events, incidents and adventures of Idaho Tom and his gallant band of boy-rangers that transpired during their passage through the Black Hills.

With no other outward motive than that begot of the spirit and love of adventure, had Captain Taylor, or as he was better known, Idaho Tom, and his band crossed the mountain and penetrated the Black Hill country. They knew at the time that it was forbidden ground—in other words, the reservation of the Sioux Indians; but, fully acquainted with the habits of the savages, their forbearance and the extent to which violations of the government treaties were usually carried, the rangers resolved to do nothing that would bring them into antagonisms with the red-skins. Before they reached the hills, however, news of the discovery of gold came to their ears; and as a number of them were

experienced miners, they modified their original intention of passing straight through the hills, and concluded to spend a month or so prospecting for gold. Procuring a number of pack animals and a mining outfit they struck out for the most unfrequented parts of the Black Hills. They went into camp in the valley of a little stream tributary to the Powder River. There was plenty of grass here for their animals, game in the vicinity that would furnish them with food, and good prospects for mining.

Although they were far from the Indian stronghold, and in a very rough and desolate part of the hills, they found one or two well-beaten trails, bearing the imprint of hoofed feet, running southward toward the Indian village. All attempts on the part of the rangers to trace these paths to some starting point failed, for all they were very desirous of knowing who their neighbors were, if there were any at all in the neighborhood.

For several days they continued to ramble on foot among the hills, and finally becoming satisfied that they were alone, they began prospecting for gold.

Dividing up into three parties, they scattered out in different directions through the hills, returning to camp at evening to report the success of the day's work.

On the evening of the third day, as Idaho Tom, Darcy Cooper and Sam Walton were returning to camp, their attention was drawn aside by sight of a light blue smoke curling up from among the hills and tree-tops some distance to their right. They had never noticed it there before, and so their curiosity became aroused. Idaho Tom gave his tools to Walton and Cooper, and sending them on to camp, he struck out across the country to make some inquiry regarding the smoke. His way lay over a series of rough, broken hills, deep-wooded valleys and yawning chasms and pitfalls. And as it was nearly night, the young miner was compelled to pick his way with extreme caution.

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Arrived safely below, what was his surprise to find no signs of a fire there. He glanced up and down the valley but could see nothing; and so he became somewhat puzzled. The valley was only about four rods wide, and guarded on each side by high bluffs, from whose face sharp ledges of rock were thrust out, here and there, above and below, the tree-tops. Huge pines, with heavy tops, shot heavenward from the valley in whose soil centurions had rooted them. Their tops were so interlaced that not a patch of sky could be seen through the dense canopy. From the projecting ledges one could have walked out upon the tree-tops.

A sort of a foreboding silence pervaded the place.

A subdued light enabled Tom to discern the surrounding objects indistinctly.

He glanced carefully around upon all sides.

He searched the bluffs towering above him with a keen eye; but as he could hear nor see any signs of life, he turned his face toward camp in no little disappointment.

The shadows of evening had long since begun to gather in this narrow, mountain defile, and as night was close at hand, Tom saw the necessity of hurrying along, and so moved away as rapidly as possible.

Suddenly a full score of mounted men swept around a bend in the valley into plain view.

Tom stopped and started back in surprise, for his first thoughts, when he saw they were white men, was, that they were a band of prairie freebooters, and he was about to seek safety in flight, when, upon a second glance, he discovered that the horsemen were a party of United States troops, the foremost of whom wore the uniform of a major of cavalry.

Idaho Tom stood his ground without the least fear, and as the horsemen drew up before him, he saluted them by touching his hat.

"Well, whom have we found here?" demanded the major, eying Tom from head to foot as though he were some contemptible creature scarcely worthy of inspection.

"My name, sir," replied Tom, politely, "is Thomas Taylor."

"And what are you doing here, Thomas Taylor?" the officer asked, his tone tinged with sarcasm.

"Having a bit of sport," responded Tom, with a confused smile.

"Do you know, sir, that you have no business here on this reservation—that that you are trespassing?" asked the major, with a martial air, and a display of self-assertion.

"I'm doing nothing objectionable to the Indians."

"Sir, that is not the question—the idea at all. Orders have been issued, sir, to arrest every man found within the limits of this reservation and march him off, especially if he has no business here. And, sir, by the authority vested in me, I shall be under the necessity of escorting you to the head-quarters of General Custer."

"Indeed!" replied Tom, somewhat puzzled over his dilemma; "this is something I had hardly expected; and if you will allow me to go on, I will promise to quit these hills with all possible speed."

"I can, and will do no such a thing, sir. My duty is imperative; moreover, I have no assurance you would keep your word."

"What do you take me for, major?" Tom asked, a slight flush mounting to his handsome face that appealed directly to the soldier's admiration.

Stung to the quick by Tom's reply, the major retorted:

"Sir, I take you for an insolent puppy; and I desire you to understand that no further impertinence will be tolerated," and turning to two of his men, ordered them to take Tom into custody and march him along in rear of the command.

"I am, and will do no such a thing, sir. My duty is imperative; moreover, I have no assurance you would keep your word."

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